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THE
ADMINISTRATION,
AND THE
OPPOSITION.

ADDRESSED TO THE CITIZENS OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

By Algernon Sidney.

Salma Hale

CONCORD.

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1826.

To the Citizens of New-Hampshire.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

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More than a year has elapsed since the present administration were inducted into office; a session of Congress has been held; and a party has been formed evincing a determination to make a systematic opposition to the government. A period has therefore arrived, when it is proper, nay, our duty as freemen, to go into an examination of the course which has thus far been pursued by the administration, and also of the motives and conduct of the party in opposition. Such an examination may enable us to determine whether we are bound to support and give strength to the former, or to enlist under the banners of the latter.

But it may not be improper, in the first place, to make a few remarks in relation to the late presidential election, and the formation of the cabinet. Correct opinions on these subjects are important, and may assist us in forming correct opinions on others.

At an early period, many candidates for the highest office in this republic were brought forward. Honorable as it was to our country, that it contained so many distinguished citizens and statesmen, it was yet unfavorable to the repose of society, that their qualifications and merits were, at the same time, urged with so much zeal, by their respective supporters. Of those who had been proposed for consideration, public sentiment, in the progress of the discussions, designated four as the ablest and most deserving: Mr. Crawford, whose agreeable manners and respectable talents had raised him to high and important stations; Gen. Jackson, whose brilliant achievements in the last war, had encircled his name, and that of his grateful country, with unfading glory; Mr. Clay, justly admired for his persuasive eloquence, and distinguished, before all others, for his warm devotion to republican principles; and Mr. Adams, employed from his youth in the service of his country, surpassed by no one in talent, and by no one in attachment to the country, he had so long and so faithfully served. Of these, the two first were supported by the southern section of the Union, which enjoys the distinguished honor, an honor of which it is justly proud, of having given to the republic a chief magistrate in eight out of nine quadrennial elections; in other words, for thirty-two of the thirty-six years

that have elapsed since the formation of the Constitution. Gen. Jackson received also some support in the western, and more in the middle States. Mr. Clay was the favorite candidate of the west; and Mr. Adams received the undivided vote of New-England.

It is evident, therefore, that in the late election, local had much more influence than party considerations. And this was natural. Political excitement having subsided, free operation was given to the strongest of all the noble passions which can actuate man, love of the place of his birth. This passion is inherent in the hearts of us all. The town in which we were born has, and deserves, the first place in our affections. The honor of our own State is most dear to us, and justly; next, that section in which our State is placed; and he whose attachment to these is ardent and devoted, will not feel the less attachment to his whole country. Nay, the latter springs from the former as its source, and could not exist without it.

Of these candidates, no one had a majority of the electoral votes, and the election devolved upon the House of Representatives, by whom Mr. Adams was elected. The friends of Mr. Crawford have asserted, that the Representatives were bound to choose him, because he was the candidate nominated by a Congressional caucus. The friends of Gen. Jackson have asserted, that they were bound to choose him, because, having received the highest number of electoral votes, he was of course the favorite of the people. *Bound to choose*, is a contradiction in terms. It is an absurdity, which no sensible freeman would utter, and no spirited freeman could understand. No, the House is, by the Constitution, left free to choose, limited only as to the number of candidates.

The reason assigned why Mr. Crawford should have been elected will not be allowed to have much weight, when it is recollected of how small a number that caucus was composed. The reason assigned in favor of Gen. Jackson would be entitled to consideration, were it founded in truth. But, from the fact that Gen. Jackson had a greater number of electoral votes than any other candidate, it does not follow, that he was the favorite of the *people*. By no mode of calculation whatever could he be considered the favorite of a *majority* of the people. Admitting the electoral votes to furnish a correct criterion of their sentiments, he was a favorite of less than two fifths—only 99 being in his favor, while 162 were against him. Had he been elected by the House, the appellation of “minority President” could have been as justly applied to him, as it has been to Mr. Adams.

But it is denied that the electoral votes are a correct criterion of the sentiments of the people. That every vote must count

one is admitted, for so the constitution ordains: but that every vote represents an equal number of citizens is by no means true. That every vote, when the Representatives vote by States, must count one, whether that vote be given by Delaware or New-York, is also admitted; but neither is it true, in this case, that each vote represents an equal number of citizens. Both are constitutional modes of electing a President; but neither is a correct mode of ascertaining public sentiment.

No means exist for ascertaining with exactness the sentiments of the people, in regard to the Presidential candidates, at the late election. The vote by States, as I have already said, is not a correct criterion, for some States contain many more citizens than others. The vote by electors is a much better criterion, but not a correct one, for these reasons: three fifths of the slaves, who do not vote, are added to the number of citizens to determine the number of electors, to which the State is entitled; the State containing the smallest number of citizens has two electors in addition to the number of its Representatives, while the State containing the greatest number is entitled to no more; and in some States electors were chosen almost unanimously, while in others there were large minorities for the electoral tickets, that did not prevail. By collecting all the votes given by the friends of the respective candidates throughout the Union, it has been ascertained that, had the electoral votes been given according to the votes of the people, and of their Representatives in the State Legislatures, omitting fractions,

Mr. Adams would have received	93,
General Jackson	86,
Mr. Crawford	47,
Mr. Clay	28.

Mr. Adams was, therefore, in preference to any other candidate, the choice of the people of this republic. He received the votes of a majority of the States, and of a greater number of Representatives than any other candidate. He was elected President according to all the forms prescribed by the constitution. He was therefore entitled, in advance, to the confidence and support of his fellow citizens; and that confidence and support should continue to be generously afforded until, by his conduct, he has shewn himself unworthy.

The first duty which devolved on him, was the nomination of persons to compose his cabinet. For the office of Secretary of State, he selected Mr. Clay. This gentleman resided in a part of the Union, whence a Secretary of State had never been selected. He had long held a conspicuous station among his fellow citizens. Devoted to republican principles—the favorite of the republican party—he had six times been elected Speaker of

the national House of Representatives; he had been deputed by Mr. Madison to negotiate a treaty of peace with Great Britain; and so highly were his talents and patriotism appreciated by those who knew him best, that they deemed him worthy the highest office in the nation. In the eyes even of the opposition, he had but one disqualification—he voted for Mr. Adams. They may insinuate or assert—what cannot be asserted?—that this vote was not conscientiously given; but not a particle of proof has been or can be adduced to prove such an assertion. For whom else could he consistently have voted? Not for Mr. Crawford, for he had early, openly and decidedly opposed a nomination by a congressional caucus; that gentleman's ill health rendered it extremely improper to entrust the welfare of the nation in his hands; and his friends were so few as to render any aid he could afford them unavailing. Not for Gen. Jackson, for he had long been personally and politically opposed to him; he had, as a member of the House of Representatives, charged him, in a formal manner, with violating the constitution, the ark of our political safety; and he saw in the elevation of such a man to the office of chief magistrate, whose duty it is to administer the laws and support the constitution, an omen portentous of evil to the country, and of destruction to the liberties of the people. He could not have voted for either without sacrificing his consistency of character, the brightest jewel a statesman can wear. He therefore voted for Mr. Adams. And for this, was Mr. Adams permitted or bound to deprive the country of his services in the station which every consideration called him to fill? Must the President, in craven dread of misconstruction and calumny, have forborne to appoint a man to an important office, merely because that man had given him his vote? Little minds would have done so; and little minds would have applauded such a course, and called it proof of political integrity. But Mr. Adams could not do so without acting contrary to his own nature. He is too fearless to shrink from doing what is right, from a dread of blame. He holds no communion with little minds, and neither their censure nor their applause is the subject of his contemplation.

For the other members of his cabinet, he selected men of talents and experience; men who had long been known to the nation, republicans in principle, and possessing the confidence of the republican party. He was not pledged, as Gen. Jackson was virtually, to introduce a federalist into his cabinet, and he did not. In this he acted properly and wisely; for however true it may be that the federalists, as a party, are powerless, or extinct—that many are honest and able men—yet the prejudice against them is still so strong, in some parts of the Union, that

an administration not wholly republican, would not be cheerfully and cordially supported by a majority of the people. Neither he, nor his friends, gave any intimation, as did the friends of Mr. Crawford, whether with or without his direction, is not known, that, if elected, he would form a "broad bottomed administration," with which all parties should be satisfied. He held out no lures; he enticed no man from his party; he made no promises, and of course was not placed in the dilemma of weakening the government by observing, or of fixing a stigma on his character by disregarding his word. Acting in the spirit of the remark made by Mr. Monroe, in his published correspondence with Gen. Jackson, he determined that his administration should rest for support upon the great republican party.

Against a President so chosen, and against an administration so formed, it was certainly to be expected, that no strenuous opposition would be made, until something had transpired, to shew that they were unworthy of confidence; or, to use the words of Mr. Crawford, that "they would be judged by their measures." Ebullitions of passion from the disappointed would have been natural; and, as human nature is constituted, even pardonable; but these, it was supposed, would subside, when time had been afforded for reflection. A sufficient time has elapsed, yet intemperate passion still bears sway, and an opposition has been organized actuated by a bitterness of feeling, and a recklessness of all considerations but success, which has had no parallel since the first years of Mr. Jefferson's administration.

Of whom is this opposition composed?—It is composed of the friends of Mr. Calhoun, whose youthful ambition to take the highest seat in the synagogue, has been defeated; of the friends of Gen. Jackson, whose pardonable ambition to attain the same situation, has also been defeated; and of other ambitious politicians who, conscious of their own demerits, have, upon the calculation of chances, determined in favor of committing themselves to the stormy sea of opposition, in the hope of sharing in the credit of aiding to bring the ship safely into port.

Understand me not to say, that all are actuated by chagrin from disappointment, or selfish ambition. Far from it. Every party embraces honest and honorable men. Boldness in accusation, adroitness in sophistry, flattery addressed to the vain, and skilful appeals to the prejudiced, mislead many good men, and many who, if not altogether good, deserve not great severity of reproach.

But not only is this opposition composed principally of disappointed partizans; it is also a local opposition. Our brethren of the south have strong local and State attachments. That inbred love of home, which is the source of all patriotism, and

which, properly regulated, is the noblest of human affections, is their ruling passion. Much good has it done them; much honor has it gained them; and hitherto the nation has had little cause to complain, that it has operated injuriously. Their leading men are trained and practised politicians. They are bound together by the strongest ties of interest and affection. No party bickerings have divided them, set brother against brother, and neutralized their influence. Their greatest men are sent to Congress. They love power, and God forbid that it should be said that, so long as they retained it, the nation did not prosper. But, having retained it long, they have now lost it. They ought to have submitted without a murmur. They ought willingly to have conceded to others, what others have so long conceded to them. They ought to have reflected, that there is a spirit in other men, an honourable spirit, and similar to that by which they are actuated, which will not permit one, however worthy, forever to retain a privilege to which others, who are equally worthy, have an equal right. They ought to have remembered and acted upon the republican principle of rotation. But it is not surprising, that the possession of power should have operated upon them, as it does upon all other men; that the long possession should make them love it the more; that the loss of it should excite unpleasant sensations, and impel them to pursue a course which they would condemn others for pursuing.

I do not make these remarks for the purpose of exciting hostile feelings against our southern brethren. I make them to account for the singular opposition, which is arrayed against the present administration. And should the effect be to produce in our bosoms a sufficient degree of the same spirit to counterbalance that, which animates them—a greater degree I should sincerely deprecate—the patriot will not say that I have made them unprofitably. Certain I am that in that case, we should obtain, as we should deserve, a much higher degree of their respect.

Does any one doubt this, or require a proof of these remarks? Let him recollect the caustic and contemptuous expressions applied to the seceders on the Missouri Question. Let him remember the sneers of Mr. Randolph, at our "*puritan*" President. Let him read the following remarks, boldly, but one would think, incautiously, made, by the same prominent member of the opposition party. "We know what we are doing. We of the south are united from the Ohio to Florida—and we can always unite; but you of the north are beginning to divide, and you will divide. We have conquered you once, and we can, and will, conquer you again. Aye, Sir, we will drive you to the wall, and when we have you there once more, we mean to keep you there, and will nail you down like base money."

And what are the charges, which this opposition make against our puritan President, and what are the measures which they have opposed?—Aware of the honest prejudices which exist, they have “given him the bad name” of federalist.—Let us not, my fellow citizens, be deprived of our reasoning faculties by this appeal to our prejudices. Let us not arm ourselves with stones and bludgeons the instant the cry reaches our ears. Let us not, like a Salem jury, return a verdict of guilty, the instant, and for the sole reason, that the charge is made. Let us demand proof of the fact.

Mr. Adams, as all well know, was once considered a member of the federal *party*. While his father was President, he did not place himself in opposition to his administration; but he did not, like Mr. Crawford, take an active part in supporting it. If the error of Mr. Crawford, upon whom filial respect imposed no restraint, can be forgiven, shall that of Mr. Adams be remembered and visited upon him at this late day?

But in the long course of his political life, he has never advocated those *principles*, which were characteristic of the federal party. His scrupulous reverence of the constitution is not surpassed by that of any republican. It is well known that the journals of the Senate, of which he was long a member, have been searched by his enemies, and that the most heinous charge which has been brought against him was, that he voted against the law which forbade the importation of slaves after the year 1807. The reason which he has assigned for that vote evinces the regard he entertains for that sacred instrument. It was that, although the law was not to take effect until the time permitted by the constitution, it was yet on its passage before Congress had power to act on the subject. With many, this reason would be considered conclusive; it must convince all that the constitution may be entrusted to his care without the least hazard of violation.

Not a single vote of his can be brought forward, not a single act of his can be adduced, which has contravened any of the principles or doctrines of the republican party; which has tended to extend the power of rulers, or to abridge the rights of the people. If in name, he has once been a federalist, in principle and practice he has always been a republican.

In his manners too, and they are of principles a more sure criterion than professions, he is simple, unaffected, unostentatious, more closely resembling Mr. Jefferson than any other of his predecessors. Mr. Randolph, in one of his speeches, took occasion to mention, in the same sarcastic manner that the federalists once used in speaking of our first republican President, that formerly he had often, when riding in a carriage, met him “trudging through the mud, with an umbrella over his head.” His con-

stant and unwearied industry, in the performance of his public duties, unequalled perhaps by that of *any* man in *any* station, may have given an outward coldness to his manner, less pleasing perhaps than the manners of those who frequent the fashionable circles of the metropolis, but certainly, when the cause is considered, much more to his honor.

Is it always forgotten that at a time when the federal party, encouraged by our foreign difficulties, made an effort, with a good prospect of success, to regain the ground they had lost, Mr. Adams cheerfully lent the aid of his powerful talents and high character to support a republican administration? Is it forgotten that, for the course he took on this occasion, he incurred the deep displeasure of the federalists of Massachusetts? Is it forgotten that he enjoyed, in the highest degree, the confidence of Presidents Madison and Monroe? and that the latter, avowing and acting upon the principle, that his administration ought to rest for support upon the republican party, selected him, with the approbation of the Senate, to fill the highest seat in his republican cabinet?

But it is said that Mr. Adams is supported by the federalists. If such be the fact—if the federalists come upon the ground we occupy, is that a sufficient reason why we should leave it? Miserably weak indeed must be that republican, who can thus be driven from his post; who would thus sacrifice his reason, his principles and his patriotism to his prejudices. Would he flee around the horizon? Rather let him stand, independent and firm, on the ground he has chosen, and maintain it as his own.

The federalists in a body supported Mr. Monroe; but it was not then thought expedient, by the politicians of the south, to proclaim among themselves, and to pass to their obsequious followers amongst us, the cry of denunciation against him.

But how far true is this charge *against Mr. Adams*, (singular charge) that the federalists support him? It is believed that every federalist in Congress, who lives south of the Hudson, (with a solitary exception, and he lives near it) is *opposed* to Mr. Adams. I do not make this assertion with perfect confidence, for little is now known of the appellation which our politicians bear. I believe it to be correct. It is well known also that many federalists, who live north of the Hudson, are decidedly *opposed* to him. Of the former class are Berrien of Georgia, Rowan of Kentucky, Tazewell of Virginia, M'Lane, Buchanan, Hemphill, Mangum, M'Neil, Verplanck, Drayton, &c. &c. Of the latter class are Baylies, of Massachusetts, Timothy Pickering, and the whole Essex junto. It is indisputably true, that the only federal vote given for President, that of Delaware, was given against Mr. Adams; it is true also, that fewer federalists now support Mr. Adams than did before support Mr. Monroe;

and that he is cordially supported by a majority of the republican party.

The opposition, composed thus in part of federalists, furthermore allege that Mr. Adams has appointed federalists to office. When a specification is called for, the names of Mr. King, Mr. Sergeant, and Mr. Williams, of Vermont, are mentioned. It is not said that these men are not honest, not capable, not friendly to the constitution, nor in any way unfitted to perform the duties of the offices which they have been appointed to fill; nor can it be denied that Mr. King possesses the confidence of republicans, he having been chosen Senator by a republican legislature. The full amount of this charge is, therefore, that of the two or three hundred individuals appointed to office, three are federalists; and this is the only charge yet made against Mr. Adams that is supported by fact.

No man, actuated by the true spirit of republicanism, ever censured Mr. Adams for these appointments, and no such man will permit this charge to have any unfavorable influence on his feelings. Among the prominent doctrines of the republican party are, tolerance of opposite opinions in others; liberality of sentiment; hostility to persecution; and the extension of equal privileges to all, so far as may be compatible with the security of freedom. It was these doctrines which made republicanism so lovely in the eyes of the people of this country. It was by professing, applauding, and inculcating them, that the republican party were carried forward, from triumph to triumph, till every State owned its sway, and the victory was rendered as decisive and complete as any political victory ever gained. One of the charges made against the federal party, and powerfully efficient in accomplishing their overthrow, was that, disregarding the merits of republicans, they appointed only federalists to office. Intolerance thus displayed had the effect which it always has had, and always will have; it made converts to the persecuted party, and excited popular indignation against their persecutors. Mr. Jefferson, more strongly imbued with republican sentiments than any man that ever lived; who well knew by what principles the republicans had acquired power, and by what errors the federalists had lost it, bade us, in his inaugural address, to "reflect that, having banished from our land that religious intolerance, under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little, if we countenance a political intolerance, as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and as bloody persecutions."

Here it may be said, but certainly not by a republican, that these were words without meaning; that, to ascertain what were Mr. Jefferson's principles, we must look to his practice and not to his professions; and that, during the period of his administra-

tion, he appointed few federalists, and removed many. It is well known that with this inconsistency Mr. Jefferson was charged, in the celebrated memorial from New-Haven. And how did he repel the charge? After alluding to the intolerance of the federal party, he proceeds: "I lament sincerely that unessential differences in opinion should have been deemed sufficient to interdict half of the society from the right and the blessings of self government; to proscribe them as unworthy of every trust. It would to me have been a circumstance of great relief, had I found a moderate participation of office in the hands of the majority; I would gladly have left to time and accident to raise them to their just share. But their total exclusion calls for prompter correctives. I shall correct the procedure; but that done, return with joy to the state of things, when the only questions concerning a candidate shall be, Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the constitution?"

I do not quote the sentiments of this illustrious statesman for the purpose of criminating the republican party. I am proud to say, that that party are not obnoxious to the charge of acting contrary to those sentiments. Republican presidents, and republican governors of this state, have appointed federalists to office, and for this they have been justified and applauded; and they were considered republicans as well afterwards as before. I make the quotation, to remind my brethren, who have now been twenty-five years a majority, of those first, fundamental principles which the primitive republicans adopted as a part of their political creed. I make it for the consideration of that portion, who, retaining all the animosity engendered by party contentions, are in danger of forgetting what republicanism is, and of rendering it unlovely, by representing it like the federalism of ninety-eight. I make it to indicate a course of conduct, which would establish the republican party on the firmest foundations, and save it from the fate, which all political parties must suffer, which, in this liberal age, feeling power, practice intolerance.

And the course I would indicate, is not, by any means, that we should surrender into other hands the power we have happily gained; not that we should incur the hazard of permitting the government to be administered in a manner contrary to the principles we profess. But it is, that, in the enjoyment of our unexampled success, we should be mindful of our principles, and of the lessons of experience; that we should prove, by our conduct, that it was not the emoluments of office, for which we contended; that we should display enough of magnanimity to prevent those, whom we have deprived of power, from feeling as though they were in their native land, "proscribed as unworthy of every trust;" that, in fine, we should continue to do as we have done, and confiding in none but the able and patriotic, make

a distribution of offices, at least, in the proportion of three in two hundred.

Upon these principles, I defend and approve the nomination by the president and the appointment by the senate, of Messrs. King, Sergeant and Williams. He who condemns them must show that these principles are unsound, or forfeit all claim to the appellation of republican.

Such are the charges made against the President, by the opposition; and such the answers which, in the spirit of republicanism, truth enables me to give. Permit me now, my fellow citizens, to direct your attention more particularly to the character and conduct of the opposition.

The first remark that occurs, is, that they are not contending for any political principle. A part are federalists; a part are republicans. Some are in favor of the most liberal construction of the constitution; others in favour of the most strict construction. A portion are in favor of appropriating money for internal improvements; some deny that congress possess the power so to do. Some are in favour of encouraging manufactures; others believe that every species of industry ought to be equally favored. Some were the friends of Jackson, some of Calhoun, some of Crawford. The most turbulent and ambitious of the disappointed have congregated together. It is not identity of *principle*; it is merely identity of *feeling*, that forms the bond of their association; and of this feeling enough has been said to enable you to judge of its purity. It remains to be seen how firmly such a feeling will amalgamate so many elements universally heterogeneous and discordant.

The most important measure adopted at the late session of congress, the mission to the Congress of Panama, was opposed by this singular combination of men. The measure was recommended by the President, to whom the constitution has committed the management of our intercourse with other nations. As he is obviously best acquainted with our foreign relations; as he can have no possible motive for recommending a measure that would be unfavorable to our interests. this measure ought to have been discussed with candour, and cheerfully adopted, unless decisive objections could be urged against it. It was, on the contrary, opposed with desperate and long continued pertinacity, occupying the time of congress to the exclusion of other business, and occasioning an expense greater than our whole state expenditure for three, or even for four years.

And what is the nature or character of this Panama congress? On what ground has the mission been opposed? And what are the benefits which may reasonably be anticipated from it?

Four or five years ago, Gen. Bolivar, who has acquired the flattering and appropriate appellation of the Washington of South

America, proposed that a meeting of commissioners, from all the Spanish American republics, should be held, at some central place, to deliberate upon subjects connected with their common safety and common welfare. It is known, that most of these republics have entered into treaty stipulations to send commissioners. From these treaties, it appears, that the purposes for which the congress is to be held, are "to cement, in a more solid and durable manner, the intimate relations which ought to exist between these republics, to serve *them* as a council in great conflicts, as a point of union in common dangers, as a faithful interpreter of *their* public treaties, when difficulties shall arise, and as an arbitrator and conciliator in *their* disputes and differences."

The assembling of a body of diplomatic agents so near us, representing powers with which we have such frequent intercourse, and such intimate political relations, must naturally have been considered, by the administration, as an important and interesting occurrence. No subject could be there discussed; no decision whatever could there be made, which might not, in a greater or less degree, affect our interests. It must therefore, from the first, have been highly desirable to them, from regard to the interests of their country, to know what subjects were there to be discussed, the opinions and views entertained and expressed, and the conclusions agreed upon. Ought they, in order to acquire this information, to have placed there a secret unaccredited agent instructed to obtain it, in any way he could, from unauthentic sources? and who, by communicating the title he might acquire, would do more injury than by communicating nothing. Fortunately, they were relieved from the necessity of adopting this unpleasant and unsafe expedient.—Our neighbors have spontaneously invited us to be present at the meeting; and have even offered us a seat at their council board. And the manner of this invitation must be as gratifying to us as it is honorable to them. Regarding us as the eldest of the young family of republics, the minister from Colombia observes; "It is presumed that the government of the United States possess more light on the subject of international law, than the other states of our hemisphere;" and "their voice will be heard with the respect and deference which their early labors, to fix some principles of that law, will merit." And the minister from the republic of Central America assigns "the importance and respectability which would attach to the General Congress of American republics from the presence of envoys from the United States," as a motive of the invitation which he was instructed to give. And he afterwards adds, that he is instructed distinctly to say, that the congress "will not require that the representatives of the United States should, in the least, compromise their present neutrality, harmony, and good intelligence with other nations."

It was now placed in the power of the United States to have public and accredited ministers at Panama, who could be present at the deliberations of the congress; who might recommend the adoption of such measures as from our experience, we should judge most advantageous to them; and *prevent the adoption of measures which might prove injurious to us.* That measures of this last description might be adopted, there is certainly some reason to apprehend. "Sometimes," observes the president, in his message to the Senate, "the South American nations, in their intercourse with the United States, have manifested dispositions to reserve a right of granting special favors and privileges to the Spanish nation as the price of their recognition; at others, they have actually established duties and impositions operating unfavorably to the United States to the advantage of other European powers; and sometimes they have appeared to consider that they might interchange, among themselves, mutual concessions of exclusive favor, to which neither European powers nor the United States should be admitted. In most of these cases, their regulations, unfavorable to us, have yielded to friendly expostulation and remonstrance; but it is believed to be of infinite moment, that principles of a liberal commercial intercourse should be exhibited to them, and urged, with disinterested and friendly persuasion upon them, when all assembled for the avowed purpose of consulting together upon the establishment of such principles as may have an important bearing upon their future welfare."

To the invitation, therefore, given in this friendly and respectful manner, the secretary of state was instructed thus to reply: "The president has determined, at once, to manifest the sensibility of the United States, to whatever concerns the prosperity of the American hemisphere, and to the friendly motives which have actuated your government, in transmitting the invitation which you have communicated. He has therefore resolved, should the Senate of the United States, now expected to assemble in a few days, give their advice and consent, to send commissioners to the congress at Panama. *Whilst they will not be authorised to enter upon any deliberations, or to concur in any acts, inconsistent with the present neutral position of the United States, and its obligations,* they will be fully empowered, and instructed upon all questions likely to arise in the congress, on subjects in which the nations of America have a common interest."

The acceptance of the invitation, even in this guarded manner, has been condemned by the opposition. They have exerted all their faculties; they have resorted to every expedient, to prevent the sending of commissioners. From the 26th of December to the 14th of March, the subject was detained in the Senate, and after that time, many weeks in the House; and, in ad-

dition to a long report from the pen of a federalist, many and long speeches were made against the measure. It is certainly proper, that all the important arguments urged by the opposition, should be stated and examined before a decision is passed upon their conduct.

And here I would caution you to control those feelings, with which, as friends of American liberty and as enemies of European domination, you must all be animated. You would otherwise be in danger of passing a harsh judgment upon the conduct of the opposition. It is certainly unfortunate for them that they are contending against a course, which those feelings would prompt. It is matter of history, that the republican party gave their uncalculating sympathy to their brethren of France, in the commencement of their struggle for freedom. The subsequent conduct of that people forfeited our sympathy, as adherents of republican principles. Perhaps we shall again be disappointed; and we may again be reminded of our folly by those who disregard, if they feel, emotions of sympathy for brethren of the same principle, inhabitants of the same hemisphere, struggling to secure their liberty and independence; who may succeed if we encourage, who may fail if we withhold our countenance and advice; whose success would strengthen us and our cause, and place it upon a foundation never to be shaken.

The principal argument, why we should not send commissioners to this Congress, is derived from its alleged character; it is declared to be a belligerent congress; a permanent congress; having legislative and judicial powers; and this argument is calculated to have much more weight than it ought, from a misconception which naturally prevails in this country, of the meaning of the word. * Here it is applied to a body, whose members vote; a majority of which controls the minority, and which possesses and exercises the power to pass laws. Before, it was never so applied. Its primitive and general meaning, and the meaning which, so far as we are concerned, it has, in this case, is a collection of ministers met together to *discuss*; to ascertain the opinions, wishes, and views of the nations represented. As an assembly, it possesses no authority. If all the ministers but one concur in a measure, and that one dissents, the nation he represents remains as free as before. They can agree to no acts but in the shape of treaties between nations, not with the congress as a party; and these treaties are not binding unless authorised by instructions, and afterward ratified by the ratifying power.—That treaties are often made *at* a congress, is certainly true; it is an exceedingly convenient mode of doing at once, and cheaply, what might otherwise require a long time and much expense to accomplish.

It is said that this is a belligerent congress; and to prove it, reference is made to the treaties, which provide that it shall be held.— But to these treaties we are not a party, and we are, in no sense, bound by them. It is indifferent to us what they contain, or what may be the character of the congress. That character, whatever it may be, will not be communicated to our ministers. They, untrammelled by treaties, are sent for specific purposes. These purposes are anti-belligerent: to put an end to the horrors of war, or if that be not possible, to moderate its rigors and circumscribe its limits.

Neither is it material to us, in deciding the question of appointing commissioners, whether the congress is intended to be perpetual or not. The friends of liberty hope it will be perpetual in its duration, and in its beneficent effects. If it answers the designs of its great and patriotic proposer, it will bring to a speedy close the contest with the mother country; it will prevent those future wars among themselves which have often been predicted, and which might otherwise, after the pressure from abroad has been removed, arise among nations so unenlightened. But our ministers are not bound to remain there longer than is thought proper; and it has been expressly stated, by the Secretary of State, that it is not expected they will remain there longer than six months.

Let it be granted, (which however is denied,) that the congress possesses legislative and judicial powers. It is a sufficient answer, that they can have no operation on us. And indeed it is hardly possible to suppose, that these reasons could have been thought, by those who advanced them, to be entitled to consideration. They have been put forth as an experiment upon the credulity and simplicity of the people. In imagining and enforcing them, some little ingenuity has been displayed; but not enough to conceal the determination to oppose every measure, which the president might recommend, however wise in its conception or salutary in its tendencies.

Again, it is said that, if we send ministers to this meeting, *we may offend old Spain, and the holy alliance!* Such dishonorable fears did not prevent us from acknowledging the independence of these republics, nor from sending ministers to them. To send ministers to this meeting is no more a cause of war, nor of offence to Spain, than it would be, in ordinary cases, to one belligerent to send ministers to another. We kept ministers at France and at Great Britain, when these nations were at war, and neither was so ignorant of national law and immemorial usage, as to consider it cause of offence. It is difficult to imagine what pretence any other nation than Spain can have to be offended. Let us, to use the noble language of the President, hereafter as heretofore, take counsel from our rights and duties, rather than our fears.

The advice of Washington has also, with a disingenuousness upon which he would frown, been pressed into the service of the opposition. In his invaluable Legacy, the text book of all American politicians, he advises us, "in extending our commercial relations, to have with foreign nations as little political connexion as possible." It is evident, that the nations he then had in view were existing nations, European nations; for he immediately adds, as his reasons

for the advice, "Europe has a set of primary interests," (legitimacy, family alliances, monarchy, &c.) "which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence *she* must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of *her* politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of *her* friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course." Advice applicable, and confined, to one state of things, cannot surely be applicable to another and totally different state. Since the death of the great Father of his country, many republican nations have sprung into existence. They are situated on our very borders. They have no set of primary interests essentially distinct from ours; but they have many which to us have an intimate and close relation. In this reversed state of things, it is not unfair to infer, that a contrary advice would be given. But no such inference is made, for none such is necessary. To send ministers to Panama no more implies that we must form with the nations there represented any political connexion, than sending Mr. Everett to Spain implies that we must form a political connexion with her. Whether we shall, or shall not, form with them, or with Spain, any political connexion, depends upon the opinion, which may hereafter be entertained by the President and two thirds of the Senate.

The opposition compare the confederation entered into by the South American republics to the holy alliance of Europe. This dissingenuousness must remove all doubt, if any could exist, of the sentiments they entertain, and wish to produce in others, towards our republican neighbours. It affords also another proof of their reliance upon the influence of names, whether properly or improperly bestowed. Can they suppose us so ignorant as to believe, that all alliances, all leagues, all confederations, are unholy? that it imports nothing whether the intent, with which they are formed, be righteous or wicked? If bad men unite to prostrate free institutions, may not good men unite to uphold and preserve them?

Thank God, the government have taken their stand on the consecrated ground of freedom. Grateful, indeed, am I that, in defending them, I need only give free utterance to feelings which animate a heart devoted to liberty; that I am not compelled to resort to the insidious sophistry of Burke, nor to the malignant vituperations of Johnson; that I have only to follow the suggestions of a magnanimous policy, and to appeal to the best and the noblest feelings of human nature. From this ground, I trust, the opposition will not drive them. Let this combination of men but continue to occupy the position, and contend with the arms they have chosen, and they must labour to obtain their object, without any aid from the sympathy of the people, or from the prayers of the votaries of liberty.

And what are the benefits that may reasonably be anticipated from sending ministers to the meeting at Panama?

We should prove to our sister republics, by accepting their invitation, given with such delicate regard to our feelings and declared policy, that we take a lively interest in their success and future

prosperity. We should bind them to us by the ties of confidence and gratitude, which young nations in distress, if we may judge from our own history, are peculiarly disposed to feel. Inasmuch as they have solicited our advice, we may caution them against the errors to which republics, in their situation, are exposed. We may point out such modifications in their institutions, as may conduce to their perpetuity, and may tend to the melioration of the condition of man. We may recommend the declaration of those principles of national law in relation to the freedom of trade, and the safety of men on the ocean, for which we have always contended, and from the violation of which we have suffered so much. We may prevent, by reasoning and expostulation, the adoption of measures which might be injurious to our interests. We may avert the horrible dangers which threaten a portion of the union—a portion which we are all bound and disposed to protect—from their invasion of Cuba and Puerto Rico upon which they have once resolved, but which the President persuaded them to defer. We may, in fine, prevent their bestowing upon other nations, as the price of proffered favors, superior commercial privileges, which will exclude our ships from their ports, and our manufactures from their places of trade. And all this we may do without compromising our neutrality, or endangering our peace.

And what might ensue, should we decline their friendly and respectful invitation? Would they not have reason to think, and to say? This elder sister of ours, having established her liberty and independence, forgetting the counsel of the great Founder of her institutions, who advised her "to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people, always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence," now stands aloof, and dreading our prosperity, or cowering under the frowns of despots, fears to be seen in the company of her relations, and declines taking the hand we have proffered in friendship. She herself, although professing republicanism, furnishes another proof of the short-sighted selfishness of nations. She cares not for our interests; we will care not for hers. Why should we not purchase the acknowledgment of our independence by conceding to Spain commercial privileges which we should deny to her? Why should we not grant to Great Britain also, whose subjects, by their permitted loans, enabled us to carry on the war, and whose minister, at our doors, claims a reward at our hands, such facilities as will enable her manufacturers to grow rich, by supplying us with their elegant fabrics? Why, if Spain is obstinate, should we longer delay to invade and conquer her rich islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico? and if sparks from the conflagration, which that must occasion, should light up a flame in the adjacent States of the American Union, let her extinguish it as she may. Why should we not acknowledge the independence of Hayti, and obtain in exchange, as France has, such facilities in her ports as will enable us to drive all competitors from her markets? When we have grown stronger, we will break the chains, by which we now bind ourselves, as our elder sister did, and should she then extend her hands in friendship, we

will avert our eyes in pride and scorn. We should then hold Cuba, the key of the Mississippi, and could impose our own terms.

All this they may not only think, and say, but do. And if they are too magnanimous to do it from feelings of resentment, they may do it from imagined necessity, from mistaken notions of policy, as no friendly voice would be heard imparting encouragement, pointing out their own true interests, and exposing the insidious arts of practiced diplomacy.

And then what ground would the opposition assume? And not only they, but the whole country? A unanimous burst of indignation would be heard from our merchants, from our manufacturers, from our spirited and intelligent yeomanry, from all who would be capable of perceiving how opportunities had been lost, and interests sacrificed. The President and his cabinet would be expelled, and deservedly, from their seats, and from the hearts of the people.

Shall we, my fellow citizens, support the President of our choice—the present republican administration? or shall we enlist under the banners of an opposition, such as I have exhibited to you? I doubt not your intelligence; I doubt not your patriotism; I doubt not that nearly all of you are resolved to support the administration. But still I have fears. I fear that the lullaby of “no opposition,” sung by those who choose not now to excite our suspicions, may close our eyes in slumber. I fear that we may again be deceived in bestowing our confidence. *Let us, therefore, look not to professions, but to character.* Let us not be satisfied with the general profession of republicanism; that is a cloak which may easily be assumed by the ambitious and unprincipled. *Let us remember, that when we have parted with power, it will not return to us, until an act may have been done, which will fill us with shame and indignation.* Let us suspect the designs of those who, while the opposition, in other parts of the union, are vigilant and active beyond all former example, recommend to us moderation and neutrality. Let us confide in no one whose course has not been plain and direct, and decided; whose past conduct and well known feelings are not *a sure guarantee* that he will preserve the course we approve. Let us confide in no one who votes at the command of another; nor in any one whose friendship or enmities may lead him astray from the path of duty to his constituents. Let us confide in none but

“Men, high minded men,

“Who *know* their rights, and, knowing, *dare* maintain them.”

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